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welcome to the United States



Federal Inspection
Service

Travelers' Tips for Facilitating Inspection

We welcome you to the United States and want your entry to be as smooth as possible. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of Justice's U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and the Department of the Treasury's U.S. Customs Service (Customs) are responsible for your entry.

U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service

All passengers arriving in the United States are subject to inspection by INS. This may include visitors in transit.



Documents required by INS for entry into the United States

United States citizens arriving from outside the Western Hemisphere must present INS officials with a valid U.S. passport.

Lawful permanent residents must present INS officials with an alien registration card or a valid re-entry permit.

Visitors with a visa must present INS officials with a white form I-94 completed on the top and bottom, and visitors without a visa on the Visa Waiver Program must present a green form I-94W completed on the top, bottom, and reverse. Passengers in transit without a visa who are being escorted by an airline representative must present a completed blue form I-94T (TWOV) to INS officials.

All travelers are required to have their Customs Declaration form completed before an INS inspection.

U.S. Customs Service

Customs is charged with ensuring that all goods and persons entering the United States comply with all U.S. laws and regulations. Officers of the Customs Service inspect all persons, baggage, vehicles, aircraft, vessels, merchandise, and commercial cargo entering the United States at ports of entry to ensure compliance with U.S. entry requirements.

Before inspection by Customs officials, you must:

- Completely fill out and sign your Customs Declaration form.
- Gather all family members to be inspected together.
- Claim all checked baggage.

U.S. residents must show the dollar value of everything in their possession that was obtained outside the United States. This includes gifts and duty-free purchases.

You must declare anything you are carrying for someone else.



Visitors must declare all items being brought into the United States that will be left behind. This includes gifts and articles you are carrying for friends.

Note that all commercial items, including samples, must be declared even if they were taken out of the United States and are now being returned.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

USDA places limits on agricultural items brought into the United States from foreign countries because many items can harbor foreign animal or plant pests and diseases that could seriously damage America's crops, livestock, pets, and the environment.

USDA requires that travelers entering the United States from a foreign country declare all:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Plants and plant products
- Meat and meat products
- Animals, birds, and eggs



Your declaration may be oral, written, or both and must cover all items carried in your baggage and hand luggage. If you are returning from abroad on a plane or ship, you will be given a Customs Declaration form on which to declare your agricultural products. You will also be asked to indicate whether you have visited a farm or ranch outside the United States. Officers of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service inspect passenger baggage for undeclared agricultural products. Failure to declare any items may result in delays and fines of up to \$1,000.

Agricultural products of U.S. origin that are taken outside the United States may not be allowed to reenter and must be declared upon returning. Consult in advance with USDA inspectors.

United States Department of Agriculture

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

United States Department of Justice

U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service

United States Department of the Treasury

U.S. Customs Service

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To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or call (800) 245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

